



Tim Pawlenty
Governor of Minnesota
Chair

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Governor of Pennsylvania
Vice Chair

Raymond C. Scheppach
Executive Director

April 24, 2008

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
The National Guard Caucus
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Christopher "Kit" Bond
The National Guard Caucus
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Gene Taylor
The National Guard Caucus
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Davis
The National Guard Caucus
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515


Dear Senator Leahy and Senator Bond; and Representative Taylor and Representative Davis:


The nation's governors wish to thank you for your leadership in the passage of several provisions to enhance and empower the National Guard that were included in the fiscal year (FY) 2008 Defense Authorization Act. These provisions include elevating the Chief of the National Guard to the rank of four-star general; making the Chief the principal military advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff on National Guard matters; and ensuring that the deputy head of the United States Northern Command comes from the ranks of the National Guard.

We want to work with you in continuing these efforts to further strengthen the National Guard. The bill that you recently introduced, the "National Guard Empowerment and State-National Defense Integration Act of 2008" would further empower the Guard to carry out its missions in support of civil authorities at home, and its federal mission when called to action by the President. Specifically, the bill would give the National Guard Bureau (NGB) the function to work with states in identifying equipment gaps and validating equipment requirements; provides for governors to gain tactical control over all military forces, including active forces, operating in a state during an emergency; defines the roles of Northern Command and Pacific Command in assisting civil authorities during emergencies; provides the Adjutants General of the states with Joint Duty Credit for their experience in the position; and enhances the role of the Chief of the NGB within the DoD leadership.

These initiatives will continue to elevate the National Guard to its proper status in domestic and foreign defense of our nation. We look forward to working with you to further these efforts. The nation's governors are proud that the National Guard is capable of performing tasks in the interest of national defense and security, and is available at the command of the governor to assist the citizens of the states and territories in times of need.

Sincerely,


Governor Michael F. Easley
Co-lead Governor on the National Guard


Governor Mark Sanford
Co-lead Governor on the National Guard